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ABSTRACT

A preliminary study of homeless children and their families served by Travellers Aid agencies attempted to obtain basic information about them, and to test the methodology for use in future studies on this topic. Two data collection instruments were developed, one for use with families, the other for single persons. Agency staff completed study forms for the first 50 homeless families and first 50 homeless single persons they served during the two-month period between mid-October and mid-December 1986. The final sample consisted of 404 single adults and 163 families. Findings on factors associated with family homelessness are presented in the following areas: (1) time elapsed since parent's last employment; (2) timing of parent's last employment; (3) relationship between employment and homelessness for married couples; (4) reasons for leaving last independent residence; (5) family sheltering by friends or relatives; (6) why families left the residence of relatives; (7) location of family's previous night's stay; and (8) reasons for travel to final destination. General characteristics of the homeless children studied are presented. Data are provided on the location of other minor children of homeless families, and on the location of minor children of homeless single adults. A conclusion calls for improved information on job opportunities and housing costs so that families can make better decisions about moving, welfare benefits increases, low-interest loans, and transitional housing. Data are presented on 13 tables. Information about the authors is appended. A nine-item list of references is included. (BJV)

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